

Putting God First in Your Priorities

There are so many things that clamor for our attention and devotion: our jobs, our kids, our spouses, our hobbies—the demands and distractions of life. And we have to be careful not to let them become more important or more of a priority than our relationship with God.

The first of the Ten Commandments states we will have no other gods before Him (see Exodus 20:3). And Deuteronomy 5:8-9 (NLT) says, *You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.*

Yet how many of the things that occupy our time, money, thoughts and attention have taken the place where God is supposed to be?

Distractions from Truth

Anything can become a god to us—anything we worship or put an excessive amount of time into. Even your feelings can become a god if you allow them to control you. We need to ask ourselves, *Am I bowing down to God and His Word or to my feelings?*

Another challenge we have to confront is living in a world full of humanism and people not wanting God and His Truth to interfere with their lives and routines. It seems we have an epidemic of selfishness in our world today, and this creates all kinds of unhealthy situations.

For example, when people refuse to honor God and follow His wisdom in their decisions, it causes them to become bogged down with worry, resentment and bitterness. Eventually it shows up as sickness and disease in their bodies. And in our culture, this behavior causes a decline in our moral standards and attitudes.

But the good news is, we don't have to settle for this way of living. In Christ, we can enjoy our lives—abundantly! (See John 10:10)

How to Establish the Habit of Living for God

The key to having God's "abundant life"—His love, peace and joy—is keeping Him in His rightful place in our priorities. God said to Abraham, *Walk and live habitually before Me and be perfect (blameless, wholehearted, complete)* (Genesis 17:1). Notice that God instructed Abraham to be habitual in walking with Him and living for Him. We can do this by establishing daily

habits of prayer, worship and regular, consistent time spent in His Word.

I love the Word of God! It is amazing. It contains wisdom, encouragement, comfort and inspiration for every conceivable human problem or dilemma. His Word brings peace and stability to our spirits, and it will renew our minds (see Romans 12:2). Get excited about getting into the Bible!

Benefits of Keeping God First

Make it your goal to have a deep, intimate relationship with God. Let Him into every area of your life. If you constantly look to other people for answers and validation, pray about this and ask the Lord to help you stop doing that and instead look to Him. (See 1 Thessalonians 2:4) As we live to please God, He promises to bless our lives and make us prosper.

When you decide to serve God with your whole heart and make Him first in your life, your soul will prosper and your joy and peace will increase. Remember to lean on Him more than anything else, and tell Him, “God, I want to do this, but I can’t do it without You.” He doesn’t expect you to live for Him in your own strength or ability, and He understands when you make mistakes.

So if you mess up, don’t be discouraged and let it hold you back; confess it and keep going. God will give you grace to do what you need to do. One day at a time, you and God together can do anything!

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–Joyce

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